

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 DHA-05

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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4777

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 3 MONTEVIDEO 4432

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, SHUM, UY

SUBJ: MENDEZ PRESS CONFERENCE ON MEETING WITH PRESIDENT
CARTER

43*: MONTEVIDEO 4422

1. THERE IS NO OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS CONFERENCE.
EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF TAPED TRANSCRIPTION OF PRESS CON-
FERENCE, WHICH WE HAVE CAREFULLY CHECKED, AND COMPARED WITH
FBIS TRANSLATION, IS AS FOLLOWS:

QTE. THIS CONFERENCE WAS POSTPONED SEVERAL DAYS BECAUSE
WE FELT IT CORRECT TO FULLY ANALYZE THE TRIP WITH OTHER
MEMBERS OF THE URUGUAYAN GOVERNMENT BEFORE INFORMING THE
PRESS AND THE PUBLIC.

"DUE TO THE UNFORTUNATE DEATH YESTERDAY OF GENERAL AGUERRONDO,
THE CONFERENCE WAS POSTPONED AND I BEG YOUR UNDERSTANDING.
I BELIEVE THAT, UPON MY ARRIVAL AT THE AIRPORT LAST SATURDAY,
I COVERED THE ESSENTIAL POINTS OF MY VISIT IN GENERAL TERMS.
AS ALL THZ REPORTERS WERE NOT PRESENT, I NOW REASSERT AND
EXPAND THOSE CONCEPTS I EXPRESSED BY STATING THAT WE WERE VERY
IMPRESSED BY THE CORDIAL TREATMENT WE RECEIVED FROM PRESIDENT
CARTER AND HIS STAFF. THE CORDIALITY, AND UNDERSTANDING WERE
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INDEED EVIDENT, BUT EVEN MORE EVIDENT, AND I AM PLEASED TO
POINT THIS OUT, WAS THE REMOVAL, IF THE WORD FITS, OF TENDENTIOUS
OR SLANDEROUS INFORMATION THAT HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT AND IS
BEING MADE AVAILABLE OUTSIDE OUR COUNTRY, AGAINST OUR GOVERN-
MENT, AND, THEREFORE, AGAINST OUR COUNTRY.

"I HAVE THE IMPRESSION, EVEN MORE THAN AN IMPRESSION, THE

CERTAINTY, THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WAS CORRECTLY INFORMED WITH REGARD TO OUR COUNTRY AND OUR GOVERNMENT, AS HE EXPRESSED IT IN VERY CLEAR TERMS; HE WANTED NOTHING MORE BUT THE OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH A BETTER UNDERSTANDING AT THE HIGHEST POLITICAL LEVELS OF HIS COUNTRY. IN SHORT, I UNDERSTAND THAT THE HORIZON HAS CLEARED IN REGARD TO THE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES AND THAT IN THE FUTURE, NOT KNOWING WHETHER THE FORTUNE OF MULTIPLE AND COMPLEX INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COULD ONE DAY BRING ABOUT A CONFRONTATION OF INTERESTS.

"I REPEAT THAT, IN THE FUTURE, NO FOREIGN OR SPURIOUS ELEMENT WILL COME BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. THEREFORE, BY SPEAKING FRANKLY AND PUTTING ON THE TABLE ALL THE PROBLEMS IN THEIR FULL REALITY, WE WILL ACHIEVE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING.

"IF YOU WISH TO ASK ANY QUESTIONS, I WILL BE VERY PLEASED TO ANSWER THEM.

"QUESTION: MR. PRESIDENT, IF PRESIDENT CARTER HAD ACCURATE INFORMATION REGARDING THE SITUATION IN URUGAY, HOW DOES ONE EXPLAIN AND UNDERSTAND CERTAIN ATTITUDES THAT HAVE BROUGHT ABOUT A CHILLING OF URUGUAYAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS, ATTITUDES THAT PERHAPS ARE NOT HELD BY PRESIDENT CARTER, BUT CERTAINLY BY MEMBERS OF HIS PARTY IN CONGRESS?"
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"ANSWER: WITHOUT ATTEMPTING TO JUSTIFY SUCH AN ATTITUDE OR DEFEND IT, I FEEL THAT WHAT I HAVE JUST SAID, IN PART, ANSWERS YOUR QUESTION. I REFER TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S PRESENT INFORMATION WHILE THE FACTS TO WHICH YOU REFER ANTECEDE THIS. BESIDES, YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THE AMERICAN AMBIENCE IS VERY COMPLEX; IT IS A LARGE COUNTRY. WASHINGTON IS A POLITICAL CROSSROADS WHERE ALL INTERNAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS COME TOGETHER AND WHERE MEN ARE ABLE TO MOVE OUTSIDE THE LIMITS IMPLANTED BY POLITICAL BLOCKS WITH A FREEDOM OF ACTION COMMENSURATE WITH THEIR POSITIONS AND THE POINTS OF VIEW OF THE ELECTORATE. WHATEVER A SENATOR OR REPRESENTATIVE MAY SAY IN SUCH A STATEMENT DOES NOT NECESSARILY COMPROMISE THE POSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT AND MUCH LESS THAT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

"QUESTION: MR. PRESIDENT. SHORTLY BEFORE YOU ARRIVED IN WASHINGTON, THE GOVERNMENT THAT YOU PRESIDE OVER ANNOUNCED THE CALLING OF NATIONAL ELECTIONS FOR 1981 AND THE EXISTENCE OF A SINGLE CANDIDATE PROPOSED BY THE TWO TRADITIONAL PARTIES AND APPROVED BY THE ARMED FORCES: HOW WAS SUCH AN ANNOUNCEMENT RECEIVED? WHAT WAS PRESIDENT CARTER'S OPINION?

"ANSWER: WE DID NOT SPEAK OF THE MATTER SPECIFICALLY; WE STUDIED THE SITUATION OF URUGUAY AND OUR GENERAL PLANS. BUT ON TWO OCCASIONS HE EXPRESSED HIS HOPE THAT THE URUGUAYAN GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO OBTAIN ITS POLITICAL OPENING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. BUT, I ALSO HAVE THE FEELING THAT HE UNDERSTANDS PERFECTLY WELL THE SEVERAL ELEMENTS AT WORK HERE TO BRING ABOUT SUCH A DECISION BY THE URUGUAYAN GOVERNMENT.

"QUESTION: YOU INVITED PRESIDENT CARTER TO SEND A MISSION OF ADVISORS TO BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH THE SITUATION IN OUR COUNTRY?

"ANSWER: NO, SIR, I DID NOT DO SUCH A THING. PLEASE UNDER-
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STAND THAT I INVITED TWO SENATORS, ONE AT A DINNER IN THE WHITE HOUSE AND ANOTHER ONE AT A LUNCHEON IN CONGRESS, AND WHILE SPEAKING OF THE SITUATION IN URUGUAY I REINFORCED WHAT OUR FOREIGN MINISTER HAD STATED IN GRANADA -- OR AS THEY NOW SAY IN ENGLISH "GRENADA" -- THAT URUGUAY HAD ITS DOORS OPEN TO ALL PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL WHO WISH TO VISIT US AND LEARN OF THE TRUE SITUATION HERE. AND, AS I HAD INVITED THESE SENATORS, I WOULD BE HAPPY IF EACH WOULD ACT AS AN INTERMEDIARY OF HIS GOVERNMENT TO INVITE MEN FROM HIS GOVERNMENT, OR WELL-INTENTIONED PEOPLE, TO VISIT US AND BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH US. THIS

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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
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IS SOMETHING ENTIRELY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT YOU AND THE PRESS HAVE SAID.

"QUESTION: MR. PRESIDENT, WOULD YOU COMMENT ON THE RESULTS OF THE CONVERSATIONS YOU HELD WITH OTHER CHIEFS OF AMERICAN STATES IN WASHINGTON, OTHER THAN PRESIDENT CARTER?

"ANSWER: NO, SIR. I TALKED WITH OTHER PRESIDENTS, WITH SOME AT LENGTH, ABOUT OUR COMMON PROBLEMS, EXCHANGING IDEAS THAT WERE OF NO GREAT IMPORTANCE AS THEY WERE PURE INFORMATION RATHER THAN DECISIONS.

"QUESTION: WHEN YOU FINISHED YOUR CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT CARTER IN THE WHITE HOUSE, THE NORTH AMERICAN PRESIDENT STATED VERY CLEARLY THAT THE EMPHASIS OF THE CONVERSATION HAD BEEN ON HUMAN RIGHTS. I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW JUST WHAT IS THE FUNDAMENTAL PREOCCUPATION OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND JUST WHAT ASPECT OF HUMAN INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS INTERESTS HIM THE MOST?

"ANSWER: I HAVE ALREADY ANSWERED YOUR QUESTION IN PART. WHEN HE ASKED ME ABOUT THE SITUATION IN URUGUAY, PRESIDENT CARTER MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE WANTED OFFICIAL INFORMATION IN ORDER TO DETERMINE HIS POLITICAL POSITION, PARTICULARLY WITH CONGRESS. BUT, IN GENERAL TERMS, HE ASKED ME ABOUT THE URUGUAYAN JUDICIAL PROCESS IN CRIMINAL CASES. IN VERY GENERAL TERMS. BUT HE
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EXPRESSED NO FURTHER PREOCCUPATION. BESIDES, I AM ABSOLUTELY CONVINCED THAT HE DID NOT HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT THE TRUE SITUATION HERE. WHAT HE WANTED WAS THE OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION FOR HIS OWN GUIDANCE IN THE POLITICAL FIELD. OF COURSE, HE EXPRESSED HIS INTEREST BUT, IN UNIVERSAL TERMS, ABOUT ALL ASPECTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, NOT REFERRING ONLY TO URUGUAY, BUT RATHER ON A UNIVERSAL LEVEL.

"HE GAVE ME A COPY OF HIS BOOK "WHY NOT THE BEST", THE ENGLISH VERSION, AND IN THAT BOOK ONE CAN ALREADY FEEL HIS PREOCCUPATION WITH FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS SUCH AS THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS, AND I AM REFERRING ONLY TO THOSE PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE SUBJECT. FOR THIS REASON YOU SHOULD NOT CONCEIVE A WRONG IDEA, NOR MAKE PUBLIC A WRONG IDEA, THAT AN INVESTIGATION WAS UNDERTAKEN, NOR THAT THE CONFERENCE WAS A SORT OF DEMANDING CROSS-EXAMINATION. THIS CERTAINLY WAS NOT THE CASE, NOR WOULD I HAVE CONSENTED TO IT, NOR WOULD IT HAVE BEEN CORRECT ON THE PART OF PRESIDENT CARTER WITH REGARD TO THE TREATMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN URUGUAY.

"QUESTION: MR. PRESIDENT, THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICES AND OUR COLLEAGUES WHO ACCOMPANIED YOU ON THE TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES INDICATED THAT SHORTLY AFTER YOUR CONVERSATION

WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES AN ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE BY MR. CARTER REFERRING TO CHANGES IN THE PRESENT LAWS REGULATING THE LEATHER TRADE BETWEEN URUGUAY AND THE UNITED STATES. WAS THIS A DIRECT RESULT OF YOUR CONVERSATIONS WITH PRESIDENT CARTER"

"ANSWER: (BY UNDER SECRETARY ENRIQUE DELFANTE): YES, A DIRECT RESULT, NOT FORGETTING TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE EXTENSIVE GROUNDWORK MADE ON THIS SUBJECT. WHAT PRESIDENT CARTER PROMISED, AND AS HE SPOKE IN SPANISH AND WAS NOT ABLE

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TO EXPRESS HIMSELF WITH HIS USUAL CLARITY, WHAT HE HAD PREVIOUSLY SAID IN THE CONFERENCE AND IN OUR PRIVATE CONVERSATION, IS THAT HE WOULD PERSONALLY MAKE SURE THAT THE PROCESS WOULD BE STEPPED UP AND THAT HE WOULD USE ALL HIS GOOD WILL IN ORDER THAT, WITH A FULL UNDERSTANDING OF THE URUGUAYAN LEGISLATION, THE INTERESTS OF NORTH AMERICAN INDUSTRY COULD BE RECONCILED WITH OUR OWN.

"QUESTION: MY QUESTION IS FOR THE UNDER SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF OUR COUNTRY REVOLVE AROUND THE POSITION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMON MARKET WITH REGARDS TO MEAT. BUT AT THE SAME TIME WE ARE CAPABLE OF PRODUCING CANNED MEAT. DID YOU TALK ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF THE UNITED STATES BUYING OUR MEAT IN THOSE CONDITIONS?

"ANSWER: (BY DELFANTE) THE ONLY SPECIFIC PRODUCT MENTIONED WAS LEATHER AND THAT IS FOR A VERY SIMPLE REASON; AT THE TIME WE WERE IN WASHINGTON THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT WAS MAKING A DECISION RELATIVE TO THE QUESTION OF SHOE IMPORTATION AND, IN SECOND PLACE, THE TERM OF THE WAIVER WHICH HAD BEEN ASKED FOR LEATHER GOODS WAS EXPIRING. SO WE SPOKE OF URUGUAYAN EXPORTS WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THOSE ITEMS UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT. THUS, MEAT WAS NOT SPECIFICALLY DISCUSSED. (AT THIS POINT THE SPEAKER WAS INTERRUPTED BY PRESIDENT MENDEZ.)

"PRESIDENT MENDEZ: I THINK WE SHOULD MAKE THIS CLEAR. THE UNDER SECRETARY HAS USED THE WORD 'INVESTIGATION', BUT I DON'T THINK THAT IT IS BEING USED IN THE USUAL CONTEXT WE USE IT HERE, MEANING THAT THERE IS AN IRREGULARITY BEING CLARIFIED. THE WORD 'INVESTIGATION' IS USED IN THE SENSE OF A STUDY OF ALL THE PREVIOUS MATERIALS IN ORDER TO ARRIVE AT A PROPER DECISION. THIS IS FOR YOUR INFORMATION.

"QUESTION: MR. PRESIDENT, RETURNING AGAIN TO THE SUBJECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, ESPECIALLY WITH RELATION TO THE NEWS SER-

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VICES. DURING THE CONVERSATION YOU HAD WITH PRESIDENT CARTER, WAS THERE ANY DISCUSSION OF FUTURE MEASURES TO BE TAKEN BY THE URUGUAYAN GOVERNMENT TO LIFT SOME EXCEPTIONAL MEASURES? (FURTHER COMMENT INAUDIBLE) COULD YOU EXPLAIN FURTHER?

"ANSWER: I CAN ANSWER YOU, BUT MY ANSWER WILL NOT HAVE THE DEEP IMPORTANCE SOUGHT BY YOUR QUESTION. WHEN SPEAKING OF THE SITUATION IN URUGUAY I WAS VERY CLEAR IN STATING THAT THE MEASURES ADOPTED WERE NOT TAKEN BY CHOICE, RATHER AGAINST OUR WILL, BECAUSE OF A NEED FOR DEFENSE OF PUBLIC SECURITY, AND THAT NONE OF THE MEN FORMING OUR GOVERNMENT VIEWED THAT SITUATION WITH SATISFACTION. I ALSO POINTED OUT THAT WE WERE READY TO LESSEN THE INTENSITY OF THE MEASURES, ALTHOUGH AT THIS TIME, AS YOU KNOW, THEY ARE NOT VERY INTENSE TO RETURN THE LIBERTIES AS FAR AS CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE PEOPLE CREATE THE NECESSARY CLIMATE OF TRANQUILITY TO BRING IT ABOUT. AND, I REPEAT NOW, THAT THE MEASURES OF

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LIBERALIZATION AND STABILIZATION DEPEND MORE ON THE ENVIRONMENT TO WHICH I REFERRED THAN UPON US.

"QUESTION: MR. PRESIDENT, IT FOLLOWS FROM YOUR INITIAL STATEMENT AND FROM YOUR STATEMENTS IN WASHINGTON AND IN CARRASCO, ACCORDING TO THE COMMENTS OF NEWS REPORTERS, THAT YOUR MEETING WITH THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT IN WASHINGTON RESULTED IN AN EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION, BUT THAT THERE WAS NOT ANY CONCRETE PROPOSAL BY PRESIDENT CARTER FOR CHANGING THE URUGUAYAN

SITUATION. IS THAT TRUE? AND ALONG THE SAME LINES, MR. PRESIDENT, IF BETWEEN MONTEVIDEO AND WASHINGTON THERE OCCURS SUCH DISTORTION OF INFORMATION, AND SINCE PRESIDENT CARTER, ACCORDING TO WHAT YOU TOLD US IN WASHINGTON, WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO COME TO URUGUAY AT THE PRESENT TIME, WAS THERE ANY KIND OF COMMUNICATION SYSTEM OR FORMULA ESTABLISHED TO PRE- VISE DIRECT AND CLEAR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE TWO PRESIDENTS? "ANSWER: YES, I DID NOT CHOOSE TO MENTION IT AT THIS POINT BECAUSE ALTHOUGH IT IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE COUNTRY, AND FOR ME, I THOUGHT THAT IT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS INTER- VIEW. BUT YOU JOURNALISTS HAVE THE ABILITY, THE KNACK OF SMELLING THINGS OUT. PRESIDENT CARTER, THE THE END OF OUR INTERVIEW, TOLD ME THAT IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY DISTORTIONS OR DIFFICULTY OCCASSIONED BY MISLEADING OR TENDENTIOUS INFORMA- TION, THAT I SHOULD CONTACT HIM DIRECTLY BY MAIL OR BY TELE- PHONE WHENEVER I THINK NECESSARY. THIS QUESTION GIVES ME UNCLASSIFIED

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THE OPPORTUNITY TO MENTION, ALTHOUGH I HAD HOPED NOT TO DO IT, AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF OUR MEETING, AND THAT IS THE OBVIOUS CORDIALITY WITH WHICH PRESIDENT CARTER REFERRED TO URUGUAY. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE SAME WAS TRUE WITH REGARD TO OTHER COUNTRIES. I DO NOT PRETEND THAT THE TREATMENT WAS ONLY FOR US, BUT I WISH TO REPEAT, BECAUSE IT IS IMPORTANT, THAT OUR RELATIONS WERE CORDIAL AND FRIENDLY AND WITH A GOOD DISPOSITION FOR UNDERSTANDING. WE WERE VERY FAR FROM THE INITIAL MISUNDERSTANDING WHICH CAUSED US SO MUCH PER- PLEXITY AT ONE TIME. IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE POLICY OF WASHINGTON, AT LEAST TOWARDS URUGUAY, IS ACQUIRING THE TONIC THAT WE BELIEVED IT SHOULD HAVE. UNQUOTE

2. COMMENT AND PRESS GUIDANCE FOLLOW SEPT. PEZZULLO

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Message Attributes

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